International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development (IJTSRD)
Special Issue on Advancing Multidisciplinary Research and Analysis - Exploring Innovations | April 2024
Available Online: www.ijtsrd.com e-ISSN: 2456 – 6470

Linguistic Features of Simultaneous Translation

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ABSTRACT

The article deals with linguistic features of simultaneous translation. The article presents the results of a study of simultaneous translation of scientific discussions from mother tongue into English and from English into mother tongue. It was shown that an essential condition for the content and functional equivalence of the original and translation texts is the preservation of the genre specificity of the scientific discussion in the simultaneous translation text. One of the main difficulties of simultaneous translation is the need for probabilistic forecasting. To have the ability to make such predictions, the translator must himself understand the topic. Scientific discussions are a special type of discourse that stands at the intersection of special scientific and colloquial, which inevitably causes additional difficulties and requires the translator to be as focused and responsive as possible.

KEYWORDS: *linguistic features, simultaneous translation, functional equivalence, scientific discussion, probabilistic forecasting, difficulties of simultaneous translation*

Simultaneous interpreting is by far the most difficult type of interpreting. It involves enormous responsibility as a translator and also requires significant mental effort. Not every person, even those with perfect command of a foreign language, can perform simultaneous translation. In this regard, studying its specifics is extremely important in the modern world, especially since the need for simultaneous interpreters is growing all the time. The need for simultaneous translation arises when holding events involving a large number of people who do not speak a common language. Simultaneous translation is carried out thanks to special equipment that allows the person giving a speech not to pause for the translator to translate what was previously said. This distinguishes simultaneous translation from consecutive translation. The very possibility of simultaneous translation is explained by the fact that more than half of the words in any language do not contain any new information, and some of them may even be omitted during translation.

In modern conditions, when borders between countries and peoples are gradually blurring, and international connections are becoming more intense, the importance of the work of translators can hardly be overestimated. In addition, although English is considered the universal language of international communication today, this does not reduce the need for qualified translations from one language to another. Moreover, the most in demand is translation from English into other languages of the world.

All types of translation work are divided into two large groups - written translation and oral translation. Interpretation is, of course, a more complex task, and the degree of complexity is determined not only by the prevalence of the language and the difficulty of learning it (although, for example, translating from French is, of course, easier than translating from Swahili - if only because it is easier to find the right specialist), but also by the nature of the work itself. Interpretation, in turn, is divided into two types: simultaneous and consecutive. The most difficult type of translation is considered to be simultaneous translation. A simultaneous interpreter does not have time to select words - and at the same time, he must convey all the nuances of speech accurately. And the individual characteristics of people's speech add additional complexity to simultaneous translation.

Thus, simultaneous translation can be defined as a type of interpretation of conferences, which is carried out simultaneously with reproduction in the original language using technical means in a specially equipped booth and in a process in which, under conditions of time shortage, information of a huge volume of another type is processed per unit of text oral translation is much simpler. The speaker pauses in his speech, and the interpreter uses these pauses to announce the translation. In this case, he has a certain time to think about the construction of the phrase and choose the most correct words. But, one way or another, when interpreting there are very serious time restrictions that the translator must strictly observe. Either he is required to pronounce the translation almost simultaneously with the person speaking the foreign language, or immediately after he has uttered his phrase. There are no such restrictions for written translation.

Of course, deadlines are also assigned for written translation, but they are measured not in seconds, but in days or, in extreme cases, hours. The main types of written translation are technical, legal, business, newspaper and literary. Each of them has its own specifics and its own difficulties. From a style point of view, technical translation is the simplest, but serious problems can arise with vocabulary and terminology. For example, technical translation from French can be complicated by the presence of a large number of modern terms - in the form of neologisms, unlike other foreign languages in which technical terms, especially in the field of high technology, are imported and borrowed from English. As for the most difficult type of written translation, this is, without a doubt, literary translation. Even translating prose poses difficulties due to the need to preserve the style of the original. And successful translation of poetry is sometimes completely impossible. Those translations that readers are ready to enjoy endlessly, as a rule, belong to the pen of such masters of words, whose talent is at least as good as the talent of the original authors.

The translator's task usually includes not only an accurate but also a complete presentation of the content of the source text. "...To translate means to express correctly and completely by means of one language what has already been expressed previously by means of another language." [1, p. 15].

However, the conditions for performing simultaneous translation do not always allow the content of the source text to be presented in the target language as completely as is possible, for example, with written translation. Thus, with an average and fast pace of speech of the speaker, the translator is faced with the need to consciously reduce the volume of text in the target language. A method of reducing the volume of a message without causing significant damage to the task that the speaker sets for himself is called compression (speech compression). Speech compression is "... such a compression of speech, determined by the specific conditions of communication, in which only what is necessary for a given communication task is retained in it, and everything else is discarded." [3, p. 90]. Compression of a message in simultaneous translation is not an extraordinary phenomenon. It follows from a number of linguistic and psychological laws of speech activity and, in particular, the transmission of speech messages.

Compression becomes possible due to the information redundancy of speech. Redundancy of speech is multifaceted. In the sequence of speech signals that make up a message, there are many that duplicate each other and increase the reliability of the communication process to a very high level. If necessary, some of the overlapping elements of the speech chain can be sacrificed, that is, they can be omitted, reducing the volume of text in the target language. For example, if the translator completely translated the question "When will this plan begin?" and he has to translate the answer "The implementation of this plan will begin in 1980.", then he can painlessly compress it to "in the eightieth year."

The words "the implementation of this plan will begin in nineteen hundred" are redundant here. The first four words duplicate the first part of the question-answer unity, and the remaining words are clear from the communication situation. Along with overlapping elements, a message may contain more information than is necessary to implement a given communication task. For example, during simultaneous translation of a scientific report, links in the speech chain will be redundant to some extent, the content of which is not directly related to the topic of the report (politeness formulas, deviations from the topic). The main task of the translator in this case will obviously be to convey narrowly logical information.

Redundancy of the message may also appear due to the fact that the communication situation makes it unnecessary to convey any information in verbal form and thus allows for the message to be shortened (see the example given with the translation of the answer). Message compression has a psycholinguistic basis. The abbreviation of utterances in general is one of the main features of the oral transmission of a speech message. In the process of oral transmission in the same language, a reduction in the volume of speech messages by up to 60% is quite normal [4].

Despite such a large reduction in the text, the number of sentences in the message remains almost unchanged: the reduction occurs mainly due to subordinate clauses, participial and participial phrases. The number of different parts of speech is reduced unevenly: verbs by 30-35%, nouns by 50%, adjectives by 75-80%. When transmitting a message orally through a chain of seven people, the largest reduction occurs in the first (50%), and in the second to seventh, the total number of reductions is only 5-7%. This means that the redundancy of the text has already been eliminated and further reduction is fraught with consequences for the content of the message. Message compression in simultaneous translation is not constant. It depends on the rate of speech of the speaker and is largely determined by the combination of the source language and the target language. It is advisable to identify the extent of compression in simultaneous translation by comparing compressed texts obtained as a result of simultaneous translation with uncompressed texts.

The latter can be translated texts made in writing. Comparison of the syllabic value of texts in the target language, recorded during the work of simultaneous translators, with the source texts cannot give an accurate picture of compression, since the influence of changes in the syllabic value of the message when moving from one specific language to another will be affected. Since the amount of speech compression for each language combination will be different for the same rate of speech of the speaker, it is not possible to provide any data characterizing speech compression for any language combinations. Therefore, we will limit ourselves to data on the English-Russian language combination.

With an average and fast rate of speech of the speaker, the linguistic nature of the transformation of the message in simultaneous translation changes. Speech compression of the message occurs, which reduces the syllabic value of the text without causing significant damage to the speaker's communicative task. When a speaker speaks at a fast pace, speech compression can reduce the volume of text by one third. The possibility of speech compression is explained by the information redundancy of the speaker's speech.

Speech compression is generated by the specific conditions of the simultaneous interpreter's activity (time restrictions and parallel processes of orientation in the speaker's speech and the generation of speech in the target language) and its dimensions are determined by the need to maintain a moderate rate of speech by the interpreter in the target language. Speech compression is a form of adaptation of translation actions to the operating conditions. Compression techniques are ways of performing translation actions in specific conditions and are therefore operational in nature, i.e. they are operations.

Speech compression is carried out by replacing phrases and sentences that are synonymous or close to them with shorter words, phrases and sentences, omitting segments that duplicate information contained in the previous context, omitting semantic units that are redundant in a specific communication situation, and omitting semantic units that are redundant with point of view of the communication task.

Speech compression is accompanied by transformations in terms of semantics. Firstly, the lexical-semantic structure of sentences is compressed through the reduction and omission of semantic components. Secondly, the semantic-syntactic organization of sentences is simplified and the figurative nature of syntactic connections is usually enhanced.

As we see, the translator solves the problem of translating complex syntactic structures by constructing a logically consistent sequence of several sentences in the target language. If a simultaneous interpreter had to translate a complex sentence being read out by a speaker, then the quality of the translation and the completeness of conveying the meaning of the source text would be of lower quality.

One of the conditions that ensures simultaneous interpretation of spontaneous speech communication is the translator's knowledge of the subject of speech or some preliminary familiarity with the subject of speech. If a qualified professional translator carries out the translation, then the frequent repetition of thematic components in the text helps him. A simultaneous interpreter who knows the subject of speech well can only carry out successful simultaneous interpretation. The level of his preparation is especially important when translating spontaneous scientific discussions, since simultaneous translation of spontaneous scientific speech, in addition to the difficulties associated with this type of speech activity itself, creates additional difficulties that are associated with the uniqueness of the genre of scientific discussion.

Here is a list of such difficulties:

- changes in the grammatical structure of utterances as they unfold;
- the use of unfinished phrases, which in oral speech often end with facial expressions or gestures;
- use of grammatically incorrect phrases;
- use of colloquial words and expressions;
- unlawful condensation of reported content.

These characteristics of spoken language present a certain difficulty for the translator in the process of finding correspondences in the source language under extreme conditions.

On the one hand, it may seem that it is easier to translate spontaneous speech due to the large number of colloquial words and expressions, but on the other hand, it is a certain difficulty in translating the listed characteristics of colloquial speech in a short time during simultaneous translation. Therefore, the translator tries to use pauses in the speaker's speech to the maximum extent possible to carry out appropriate rearrangements and pronounce his text.

In conditions of live communication, the speaker, as a rule, does not bother himself with maintaining the logical clarity of the structure of spoken phrases. This prevents the speaker from constructing his statements correctly.

One of the main difficulties of simultaneous translation is the need for probabilistic forecasting, because most often a simultaneous translator does not predict how the phrase whose beginning he is translating will end. The translator must guess with the maximum degree of probability what exactly the speaker wants to say with this or that sentence. To have the ability to make such predictions, the translator must himself understand the topic of the event. In addition, the work of a translator in synchronous mode always requires constant mobilization of his attention and continuous speaking. Another difficulty of simultaneous translation is associated with the translator's reaction, or rather, with his reactivity.

The synchronized player has to instantly react every second to words and phrases perceived by ear. Excellent knowledge of two or more languages cannot be an indispensable condition for the success of a simultaneous interpreter. Such a condition is, rather, the presence of a large stock of equivalent pairs of lexical units, which are interconnected by a sign connection and allow translation not through analysis or synthesis, but in terms of the "stimulus-response" model.

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